

Have ideas about school funding? You talk, senators say they'll listen

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A group of lawmakers are holding public meetings to discuss how to fully fund basic education in the state.

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A group of senators on a seven-stop tour through the state to hear what the public has to say about education funding. And in the next two weeks, they will be in the Seattle area, with meetings planned for Bremerton and Renton.

The purpose of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee listening tour is to solicit input on how the the state should meet its constitutional duty to fully fund basic education for all Washington students. The two-hour meetings will provide information about the issues and a time for questions.

The Bremerton session will be held Thursday at the Bremerton School District Performing Arts Center, 134 Marion Ave. N. The session in Renton is Oct. 19 at the Puget Sound Educational Service District Main Office, 800 Oakesdale Ave. S.W. Both sessions begin at 5 p.m.

Committee members have already held public meetings in Vancouver and Everett. Three others are scheduled in Spokane, Wenatchee and Yakima later this month.

The meetings are part of lawmakers' efforts to comply with the state [Supreme Court's 2012 McCleary decision](#), which said the state is failing to live up to its constitutional duty to adequately fund public schools. The justices have been [fining the Legislature](#) \$100,000 a day until it can come up with an education-funding plan.

The agendas for the Bremerton and Renton meetings aren't yet available, but past sessions have included a staff presentation; a panel with school board directors, school district officials and teachers union leaders; and a public comment period. The

presentation outlines potential ways that the state can raise more money for schools, as well as the local school-levy rates across the state and a comparison of salary models.

Questions the lawmakers have for public input include:

Should the structure of local levies be changed?

How can the state ensure that local levies are not being used for basic education?

How long should the transition be? Immediate, two years, four years, six years, more?

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